

Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104999
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	336400
Inspection dates	15–16 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tom Birkett
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and saw 12 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its assessments and national assessment data, policies, improvement planning and minutes of governors' meetings. Eighty-two questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and a large sample of the 166 questionnaires completed by pupils, were also scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- girls' attainment in Years 3 to 6, particularly in mathematics, and whether standards are improving at Key Stage 1
- whether teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school
- how well school leaders promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average due to the intake of pupils resulting from the closure of a nearby smaller school in 2008. Accommodation, temporarily, is in the building of the closing school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is double the national average. This is a similar proportion to the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has achieved National Healthy Schools status as well as Artsmark and Activemark awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Excellent leadership from the headteacher and governors, supported by a strong senior management team, has enabled school staff to build solidly on previously good outcomes. The amalgamation of two school communities has been managed exceptionally well. As a result, this is a good school which has seen continuous improvement and now has some significant outstanding features.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given a good start to their learning and development from very low development points in relation to expectations for their age. They make good progress, particularly in their social skills and in their readiness to learn, and this stands them in good stead for their following stages. Due to consistently good teaching pupils make good progress throughout the school. Although teachers use assessment information well to plan for pupils and make sure there is good pace to their learning, they do not consistently make sure that the next steps to be taken are made clear in marking so pupils do not always make the progress they could. Outstanding care and support and the exceptional lengths the school goes to in securing equality of opportunity for all pupils means that pupils not only feel extremely safe, but that the additional needs of the most vulnerable are very well managed so that they also make good progress. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has improved. Teachers have worked hard in providing additional support for a targeted group of underachieving girls so that the gap between boys' and girls' achievement in mathematics has been closed successfully. Consequently standards at Key Stage 2 in all subjects are average. Pupils' enjoyment of school and, at times, their exemplary attitudes are a measure of the outstanding opportunities provided through an innovative and exciting curriculum. Some parents and carers comment on how their children are 'inspired' to follow up work in class through independent research at home which is often saved on 'memory sticks' and shared with others in school.

Rigorous and incisive self-evaluation, to which all leaders contribute, has brought about higher standards, stronger teaching and a much improved curriculum. The accurate picture of the school's performance gained from this process gives the school good capacity for further improvement. Governors have done all that they can to ensure outstanding procedures for the safeguarding and well-being of staff and pupils in what is currently the school's temporary home. Links with parents and carers, and the wider local community, are very positive. Leaders recognise the need to build on the advances made to promote community cohesion by consolidating the tentative approaches made towards contrasting schools in the United Kingdom and communities globally.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of marking in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently inform pupils of the next steps they should take to improve their work and their progress.
- Strengthen the school's contribution to promoting community cohesion by:
 - planning opportunities for pupils to learn more about cultural diversity within the United Kingdom and global community
 - monitoring the impact of the plans on pupils' attitudes and understanding of modern multicultural society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils learn well because they enjoy their lessons. They are very keen to share their learning and rise to the challenges of teachers' good questioning and well-planned tasks. Independent learning is a strong feature of the curriculum and pupils are given scope to follow their own interests. For example, pupils who were curious about a windmill that can be seen from their classroom window discovered, on visiting it, that it is a protected habitat for bats. This promoted a great deal of excitement, meaningful learning and prompted the development of good-quality research skills.

The good pace of progress in all classes means that standards have risen at both key stages in the current year. Inspection evidence indicates all-round improvement at the end of Year 2 with more pupils on track to reach the higher levels. The previously disappointing performance by girls in mathematics at the end of Year 6 has been successfully turned around by the school through well targeted additional support. Current work shows significant improvement and that pupils are on track to reach nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well provided for. Individual learning and provision are carefully planned so that all pupils are given the opportunities needed to achieve their personal best.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are polite and well mannered. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is never less than good.

Excellent relationships with peers and adults who work in the school lie at the heart of pupils' outstanding levels of feeling secure and confident with the help that is at hand. Average attendance and attainment contribute to pupils' overall satisfactory development of workplace skills. Pupils contribute a great deal to the life and ethos of the school through their involvement in activities, during and after lessons, and willingness to take on additional responsibilities. The school council follows a busy schedule and has led the rest of the school well, for example in deciding some features of their new school building. Pupils fully understand how a healthy lifestyle is important to their well-being. To this end they have fostered a link with the local Allotment Association and now grow some of their own produce for the school kitchen.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

High expectations, good challenge and fun are some of the hallmarks of all lessons. Teachers make good use of electronic whiteboards to keep pupils on their toes whether to try to 'outwit' a function machine which doubles numbers or to reinforce multiplication skills. Lesson objectives are shared clearly so that pupils know what is expected of them and they can set the pace of their own learning. Teachers take full account of pupils' varying abilities and of the way they learn best, to plan work that is matched well to pupils' particular needs. Assessments are used well to set individual targets for pupils and some are increasingly involved in evaluating their own work. Work in English is generally marked well but the same quality and consistency is not seen in all subjects so that pupils are not fully aware of their next steps to improvement. Teaching assistants fulfil a crucial role as valued members of the teaching team. They work sensitively with individual and groups of pupils and support their learning and progress well. Occasionally, the balance between listening and activity is not well matched so that there is too little time for pupils to finish tasks.

A great deal of planning, trial and evaluation has gone into developing an outstanding

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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curriculum which motivates and challenges pupils and is tailored to their needs. Pupils are given a say in what they want to find out about topics and the freedom and encouragement to apply their skills and explore different paths to their objectives. Development of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) is given high priority. There are ample opportunities for pupils to nurture and develop skills and interests in after-school clubs. The curriculum provides very well for pupils' personal, health and social education enabling them to make suitably informed choices about their safety and well-being.

The genuinely warm and welcoming environment is indicative of the exceptional care provided for all pupils. This is overwhelmingly supported by the views expressed by parents and carers who are very appreciative of the information they receive from school and the openness of staff when they need to discuss any issues. Particular care is provided for the most vulnerable pupils and the school works extremely hard to encourage and support families, especially where attendance can be improved. Social and moral guidance for pupils is rooted in clear expectations and shared values, and has a strong impact on pupils' development of good personal qualities. There are excellent systems to welcome pupils, and parents and carers, into the school and very supportive transition arrangements for those transferring to their next school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and governors' management of the amalgamation of two school communities and continued focus on the vision and drive for improvement has shown outstanding qualities. The school is a cohesive and purposeful unit in which every teacher is ambitious for every pupil. Professional development has opened up opportunities for senior and middle managers to build on their skills and add further rigour to monitoring and evaluation in order to continue the effective improvement seen in the key areas of management, teaching and the curriculum. The school's ethos and work are driven by the belief that all pupils have the equal right to achieve their best. Any discrepancies in academic or personal achievement are tackled vigorously through highly effective monitoring and support. Valuable links with local schools and colleges benefit pupils' learning in arts, sports and science subjects, including those who are particularly able and talented. High-quality practice and procedures ensure the safeguarding of pupils in school. Although the school is occupying a temporary site,

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governors leave nothing to chance. Staff and pupils alike fully understand their roles with regard to safeguarding and staying safe. Leaders have taken positive steps to promote community cohesion by forging productive links with local community groups. An action plan for development is in place but as yet there has been limited action to reach out to other communities. Consequently, pupils have only basic understanding of how different cultural groups can contribute to a cohesive multicultural society.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's knowledge and skills are at very low levels in relation to those typically seen on entry to Nursery. Good leadership and well-managed provision ensures that at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage almost all children are working within their early learning goals. Personal, social and emotional development is developed very well managed ensuring that children become confident and eager learners.

There is a strong focus on developing early reading and writing skills. The teaching of letters and sounds is very sharply focused and gives children the confidence to tackle reading and writing on their own. Well-planned activities are geared up to allowing children to explore and develop skills independently. Best use is made of the outside space available but this currently has limitations due to space and capacity for extensive exploration and play. Children can have a say in what they want to learn. An exciting outdoor activity during the inspection allowed children to follow up their ideas and learn more about trains. They enjoyed being passengers, guards and ticket collectors and made sure that the engine driver got his snack! The teacher's role was highly effective

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in stimulating children's language and imagination to keep the role play going. There is good provision for children's welfare. Parents and carers are warmly welcomed by staff and appreciate the workshops and other opportunities to share in their children's learning and development. Staff members are watchful over the children in their care and place high priority on safety and well-being. All share in the process of assessment by noting children's individual developments and helping to plan their next steps.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers expressed highly positive views about the school. Inspectors agree with the very favourable comments about the individual care and support which pupils receive. The concerns of a very small minority of parents and carers were followed up during the inspection and inspectors agree with the school that issues are responded to properly and any resulting action is closely monitored.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Park Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 353 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	55	36	42	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	65	76	19	22	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	53	37	43	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	58	34	40	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	59	34	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	58	33	38	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	45	39	45	6	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	49	33	38	6	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	56	31	36	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	50	36	42	2	2	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	45	37	43	6	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	59	25	29	7	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	62	28	33	4	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Park Primary School, Wallasey CH44 4ES

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. It is always a great pleasure to talk to such polite and well-mannered children as yourselves. You told us a lot about your school, for example about how well behaved you are, how safe you feel and the outstanding way that the adults take care of you and we agree with you entirely. We also learned that your attendance is improving. That's very important so do keep it up.

Yours is a good school and some things are outstanding. I have already mentioned one of them but you also have outstanding opportunities to learn in an exciting way and your headteacher and governors lead the school exceptionally well. We also agree with you about your lessons being great fun, thanks to the hard work and energy of all of your teachers. The standards you reach in your work are improving and you all make good progress.

I know you are very proud of your school and so are your teachers, school governors, and parents and carers. Everyone wants it to be even better, so to help that to happen I have asked for two things. First, I have asked your teachers to make sure that when they mark your work you always know what you need to do next to make it better. Second, I have asked if you can be give more opportunities to find out about how different communities in this country and from countries around the world can live and work together.

Best wishes and good luck to all of you.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson

Lead inspector

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